BRITISH COLUMBIA | BCStats

Infoline

Contact: bcstats.infoline@gov.bc.ca *Issue: 13-15* *April 15th, 2013*

- **Provincial liquor store sales rose 2.4% in 2012**
- **Housing starts in B.C. were up 2.6% in February**
- **The New Housing Price Index (NHPI) in B.C. dipped 0.8% in February**

The Economy

- **Sales at provincial liquor stores in British Columbia totalled $3.0 billion (+2.4%) in 2012**. Liquor authorities recorded a net income of $921.7 million, an increase of 2.5% over the previous year. This translates to $777.40 per person (*aged 15 and over*) on an annual basis, with beer accounting for the largest component of spending ($298.70), followed by wine ($260.50), and spirits ($218.10). British Columbian's purchases of wine (+3.6%) increased at the fastest rate, though spirits (+2.8%) and beer (+1.1%) sales values also rose.

  Nationally, sales at provincial and territorial liquor stores totalled $20.9 billion (+3.0%), earning a net income of $6.1 billion (+3.6%). On a per capita basis, sales averaged $724.20 per person. Of the provinces, British Columbia ($777.40) was second only to Newfoundland & Labrador ($980.00) in terms of per capita spending, while New Brunswick ranked the lowest, at $646.60 per person. The sales value of Canadians' wine consumption jumped 5.9%, while sales of spirits rose 3.9%, and beer edged up 0.6%. Please note that sales exclude personal liquor manufacturing, such as home brews. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

Housing

- **Total housing starts in British Columbia grew 2.6% (*seasonally adjusted*) in February, as both urban (+2.1%) and rural (+8.4%) starts increased for the second month in a row.** While the number of single-detached starts in the province was up moderately (+5.8%), a significant slowdown in apartment starts (-17.0%) dampened overall growth in the province.

  In Vancouver, total housing starts fell (-8.5%) following two months of expansion. Other urban areas in the province fared better than the largest urban centre, with housing starts rising 1.9%, entirely due to a surge in multiple-unit dwellings (+53.8%), as single-detached dwellings dropped 21.6%.

  Canadian housing starts rose 13.0% in February, as urban areas saw a double-digit increase (+18.4%) in starts following five consecutive months of decline, with both single-detached (+6.1%) and multi-family (+27.7) dwellings on the rise. Ontario (+44.7%), Quebec (+22.5%), and Alberta (+13.8%) posted the strongest increases, while PEI (-77.9%), Nova Scotia (-73.8%), and Saskatchewan (-29.7%) registered the most significant declines. *Data Source: CMHC*

- **The value of building permits issued by B.C. municipalities dropped 10.1% (*seasonally adjusted*) in February, reversing the gains recorded in January (+10.2%).** Permits for residential projects contracted 17.1%, alongside declines in intentions for industrial (-7.1%) and institutional & government (-46.4%) building construction. Overall, planned spending on non-residential projects rose (+11.6%), as commercial permits surged 63.3%. Permit values were down in three of the four reporting census metropolitan areas (CMAs), with Kelowna (+33.0%) recording a double-digit increase. Building permits fell sharply in both Victoria (-60.2%) and Abbotsford-Mission (-60.1%), while in Vancouver,

Did you know...

Seventy percent of British Columbians would support doubling the current fine of $167 imposed on drivers caught speaking or texting on a hand-held cell phone while driving.

Source: Angus-Reid

where most of the province's building activity occurs, permits fell 7.8%.

The national picture was brighter, as permits rose 1.7%, entirely due to activity in the non-residential sector (+18.9%), as residential permit values contracted 7.2%. Growth in Alberta (+17.7%), Quebec (+4.1%), Manitoba (+25.0%), and Ontario (+0.9) was behind the increase, as considerable slowdowns in the Maritimes and moderate declines in Saskatchewan (-10.9%) and B.C. (-10.1%) held back the overall increase.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **During the first two months of 2013, the value of building permits issued in the province's regions fell 19.4% (*unadjusted*) below the level recorded in the same period of 2012.** Investment intentions were higher in four of the eight regions, including Mainland/Southwest (+2.8%), where planned spending on residential (+18.5%) and institutional & government (+67.6%) projects was up. Building permits also increased in Northeast (+25.2%), Cariboo (+11.5%) and Nechako (+1.4%). Permits in North Coast (-97.7%) plummeted, following a record year in 2012. Vancouver Island/Coast (-23.1%) and Kootenay (-26.8%) were both lower compared to the same period of 2012, primarily due to weakened residential building intentions. In Thompson/Okanagan, permits were down 2.6%, as industrial intentions fell 66.2%. *Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats*

- **The cost of new housing in B.C.'s two largest metropolitan areas continued to decline in February, dipping 0.8%.** In Vancouver, new housing (house and land) prices edged down 0.6% compared to the same month of 2012, while homebuilders in the Victoria area received an average of 2.2% less for their projects.

  House prices in particular continue to exert downward pressure on new housing costs. In February, land value was up slightly (+0.2%) in B.C.'s most populous city, while the price of a new house was 1.2% lower. In the capital city, the cost of land (-1.4%) and house prices (-2.6%) have fallen since last year.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

The Nation

- **The average domestic air fare (*Canadian Level I carriers operating scheduled services*) in Canada's 10 major cities was $190.00 in the first quarter of 2012, inching up 0.9% compared to the same period in the previous year.** In Vancouver, fares rose 3.9%, to $208.30. Saskatoon had the largest increase (+8.7%), though it ranks fourth lowest in terms of average fares, at $185.50. Montreal (-4.6%), Ottawa (-3.7%), and Toronto (-1.5%) all recorded lower air fares, easing some of the pressure on the highest fare prices in the nation, with Toronto leading at $215.50. Average fares are calculated for each flight stage, defined as when a passenger boards a flight in one airport, and departs the aircraft in a different airport. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Retail sales in Canada totalled $122.9 billion in the fourth quarter of 2012, an increase of 0.2% over the same quarter in the previous year.** Increased sales of the two largest commodity groups, motor vehicles, parts, & services sales (+2.3%), and food & beverages (+1.6%), were responsible for most of the growth. Retailers of housewares (+2.0%), automotive fuels, oils, & additives (+1.7%), and health & personal care products (+1.2%) also recorded higher sales. Furniture, home furnishings & electronics sales took a hit (-5.9%), as did retailers of sporting & leisure goods (-4.6%). More moderate declines were recorded by retailers of clothing, footwear & accessories (-1.3%) and hardware, lawn & garden products (-1.2%).

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

For data originating from Statistics Canada, data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the catalogue number.

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jan 1/2013	% change on one year ago
BC	4,639.9	0.8
Canada	35,056.1	1.1
GDP and INCOME (Released Nov 19)		
(BC - at market prices)	2011	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	217,749	4.5
GDP *($ 2007 millions)*	206,180	2.8
GDP *($ 2007 per Capita)*	45,083	1.8
Household Sector Disposable Income *($ 2007 per Capita)*	26,788	0.9
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Jan 2013	3,188	2.1
Merchandise Exports - Feb 2013	2,651	-1.9
Retail Sales - Jan 2013	5,118	1.0
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	% change on one year ago	12-month avg % change
(all items - Feb 2013)		
BC	0.9	0.9
Vancouver	1.2	1.1
Victoria	0.7	0.8
Canada	1.2	1.2
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on prev. month
(seasonally adjusted)	Mar 2013	
Jobs Created (-Lost) - BC	-14.8	
Labour Force - BC	2,475.7	0.1
Employed - BC	2,302.6	-0.6
Unemployed - BC	173.1	11.9
		Feb 2013
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	7.0	6.3
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	7.2	7.0
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Apr 10/2013	Apr 11/2012
Prime Business Rate	3.00	3.00
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	3.00	3.20
- 5 year	5.14	5.44
US-CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Apr 10/2013	Apr 11/2012
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $ per US $	1.0150	1.0039
(closing rate) US $ per Cdn $	0.9858	0.9958
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on one year ago
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Mar 2013	
BC	868.14	1.1
Canada	879.01	2.2

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics
For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

2011 Census Profiles

We have added files for Health geographies, School Districts, College Regions and Ministry of Children and Family Development Regions. The file layout matches the other 2011 Profiles, simplifying comparisons to many areas . See more:
http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Census/OpenData.aspx

Provincial Electoral District Profiles 2011

Posted to our Open Data page is a 2011 Census Profile for the Provincial Electoral Districts. The file layout matches the other 2011 Profiles, simplifying comparisons to many areas . See more:
http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Census/OpenData.aspx

Population Estimates by Age and Sex 2012

Updated population estimates by age and sex for B.C. sub-provincial regions are now available. . . See more:
http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Demography/PopulationEstimates.aspx

B.C. Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector

The 2012 edition of the profile of British Columbia's fisheries and aquaculture sector is now available. See more:
http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/AboutUs/News/13-01-29/British_Columbia_s_Fisheries_and_Aquaculture_Sector.aspx

Municipal Population Estimates 2012

Population estimates for B.C. municipalities and regional districts as of July 1, 2012 are now available. See more:
http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Demography/PopulationEstimates.aspx

Released last week by BC Stats

- No releases

To Release this week

- Consumer Price Index, March 2013

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